THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir; such airlifts are provided after approval of the competent authority.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) No dues are pending against any Chief Minister.

Venkataswami Commission

2471. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the date on which the Venkataswami Commission was set up to probe into Tehelka tapes on the defence purchases;

(b) the details of the work done by the Commission;

(c) whether Government have granted any extension to the Commission and if so, when its present term is scheduled to terminate; and

(d) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item, "Tehelka probe panel may wind up" appearing in the Statesman dated the 25th October, 2001 and if so, the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) (a) Justice K. Venkataswami Commission of Inquiry was set up on 24.3.2001.

(b) and (c) The work of the Commission is under way and its hearings are in progress. Government have granted extension of the time to Justice K. Venkataswami Commission of Inquiry upto 23.3.2002 to complete its work.

(d) Yes, Sir. As stated in the reply to parts (b) and (c) of this Question, the Government has already granted extension of time till 23.3.2002 to complete its work.